THE Reconstructionist

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the Reconstructionist

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EDITORIALS

MR. CHURCHILL THREATENS THE JEWS

THE assassination of Lord Moyne in Egypt, by two crazed, fanatic members of the Stern gang, has called forth vigorous denunciations by all those concerned with the future of Jewish Palestine. The Jewish Agency and all other responsible Zionist bodies have unequivocally dissociated themselves from the policy of terror and from this violent act in particular. Despite that fact, however, Winston Churchill recently arose in the House of Commons and threatened the *yishuv* that unless every "man, woman and child" in Palestine moved to eliminate the terrorists from their midst, he would withdraw his support of Zionist aspirations. In making that statement he virtually gave notice that he would crucify an entire people for the murder of one man.

When a young Polish Jew, Grynzpan, driven insane by the horrible sufferings of his people, shot to death a minor Nazi official, the Germans burned down every synagogue in Germany and Austria and imposed a staggering fine upon the Jews in the Reich. It is entirely in keeping with their avowed code for Nazis to act like that, but it is not in keeping with avowed British standards of decency to penalize an entire people for a single act by two individuals, no matter how dastardly that act might be. Senator Owen Brewster, of Maine, rightly declared, "It is most amazing that Prime Minister Churchill should suggest that a whole people be held responsible for the misdeeds of a few without ever having given that people the opportunity to control their own affairs."

It is particularly amazing in view of the fact that statesmen and diplomats of high standing are, even at this moment, discussing seriously whether the United Nations ought not to distinguish between the Nazi leaders and the German people. If it is conceivable that the enemy of civilization may be spared blanket condemnation by an outraged world, it is only common fairness to expect that the most helpless and tormented victims of the enemy be given equal consideration. But Jews have not been merely the victims of Nazism; they have also been among the most ardent fighters in the ranks of the Allies. Jewish Palestine has gone all out for the Allied cause. Jewish boys helped stem the tide at El Alemein. Jewish blood, materiel, and transportation were poured

out unsparingly in defense of the British armies. And this extravagant aid was proferred by a people agonizing under the stifling merciless terms of the White Paper.

Does Mr. Churchill not know that for three long years the *yishuv* lived by the tantalizing code of *havlagah?* Has he forgotten that, when Arab terrorists ravaged and murdered, inspired by enemy aid, the Jews withheld their fire? Can he designate as terrorists men who, when they saw their blood brothers drowning on the Struma or rotting in Mauritius, nevertheless, stifled their deep resentment rather than resort to aggression?

Precious is the blood of a British official, but no less precious is the blood of great numbers of Jews who might have escaped slaughter at the hands of the Nazis had not the doors of the Jewish national home been shut by Great Britain. And yet, in spite of the cruel injustice of the Colonial Office toward Jewish refugees, the whole *yishuv* was incensed against the Stern gang and more than willing to apprehend them. But how can the government, after insisting on disarming the Jews, expect them to suppress an armed gang which the government itself, with all its available military and police power, has so far been unable to suppress.

What zeal did the British government display when it came to arresting and punishing the Mufti for causing the death of hundreds of Jews, Arabs and British? When the Mufti was in hiding, did Great Britain threaten the Arab population with the forfeiting of *their* rights under the Mandate as Churchill threatens the Jews with the loss of theirs? What has become of the British sense of fair play? Is it reserved for home consumption only, and is the rule of Great Britain in her colonial and mandated regions to be that of imperial tyrants from time immemorial? Can she stoop to provoking assaults by acts of injustice and then use those very assaults to justify further threatened encroachments on the rights and liberties of those subject to her rule?

Whatever considerations of empire may motivate Great Britain's policy, these do not affect the American interest in Palestine. And Great Britain is bound by treaty to make no change in the Mandate without American consent. The sentiment of the American people has become increasingly articulate in demanding the scrapping of the White Paper and the establishment of the Jewish Commonwealth. Our President is personally committed to the implementation, so far as his power and influence permit, of the Commonwealth program. Mr. Churchill's curious attack on the Jewish people conveys ominous implications. The situation seems to call for our President's intervention now. Only he can insure that the decision with regard to the future of Palestine be free from the taint of imperialist domination and be based on humane considerations and international good faith. We rely on him to do his utmost to see that the homeless of our people are given access to their national home and that Israel's historic and legal claim to Palestine is respected and firmly established.

ANTI-SEMITISM IN THE RECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN

THE dust clouds of controversy raised by the recent election are beginning to settle. We can see, on the basis of the voter's choice, new political alignments and perspectives in American life. These, on the whole, are full of promise for America and mankind. But there is one aspect of American life, revealed by the elections of 1944, that is most disquieting and confronts us Jews with a task which must be faced. We have

reference to the blatant, vehement appeal by certain sections of the Republican Party to anti-foreignism (read anti-Semitism).

True, at the beginning of the campaign, the chairmen of both major parties, in a widely publicized statement, gave resounding assurances that the campaign would be free from any appeal to racial or religious prejudice. When the political battle entered its crucial phases, however, it became increasingly clear that, promise or no promise, Republican strategy called for pulling out all the stops on anti-foreignism. From various parts of the country came disquieting reports of campaign literature and speeches replete with references to Sidney Hillman's supposed Rabbinical training and his foreign antecedents. As the campaign progressed, Sidney Hillman, the "Russian pants-presser," became a major issue. In Pittsburgh, huge billboard signs asked the local citizenry whether they were willing to let Sidney Hillman run "your country." The inference was plainer than the three-foot letters on the billboard. Mr. Hillman definitely did not belong. He was a rank foreigner.

As if the matter were not clear enough, the *New York Daily News,* apparently unable to contain itself any longer, spoke up and named names in an editorial that marked an all-time low in American political campaign history. One must go back almost a century to Know-Nothingism to find a parallel to so naked an appeal to intolerance. After listing the issues which ought to guide the voter in his choice, the editorial stated, in a sudden burst of candor: "There has been much discussion about the disproportionately strong Jewish background of the present administration." The cat was out of the bag. This, according to the bitter anti-Administration *Daily News,* was one of the issues on which the election should be decided. And while the Republican campaign orators were loudly vociferous, our civic-protective organizations were strangely silent. Though representations were made behind the scenes, it is plain that they were given scant heed.

We find a sobering lesson in all this. In past years, our civic-protective organizations were quick to take up the cudgels against small-fry professonal anti-Semitic ranters and pamphleteers. In the recent campaign, the bilge water of the latter gentry, was hardly distinguishable from the outpourings of campaign literature and speeches by many of the leaders and sub-leaders of the Republican Party. Does the fact that an appeal to nativist prejudice emanates from a major political party automatically exempt those pledged to fight anti-Semitism from taking appropriate a c t i o n ? What strategy led our Jewish civic defense organizations, like the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League of the I.O.B.B., to look the other way when faced by the most extensive organized effort to foment anti-Semitism we have yet witnessed in an American election campaign?

Whatever considerations of policy may have prompted a strategy of silence, that strategy was not an expression of courage. Of course, the matter required tact. When private appeals to the responsible parties proved of no avail, a public statement should have been issued, denouncing those who had injected racial bigotry into a political campaign. The statement could easily have been so formulated as to make clear that it was inspired by no partisan spirit but by a deep concern for the preservation of the best traditions of Americanism. To attack an individual as un-American because of his foreign origin, is to strike a blow at the heart of Americanism, at the principle that a man is to be judged by his personal worth, not by his antecedents. All this

and more could and should have been said. Prominent American citizens of both parties would have readily associated themselves with a statement of this character. Why action along these lines was not taken remains a mystery to the American Jewish community. The refusal to recognize as anti-Semitism a general attack on all those elements whom certain nativist groups consider alien is not evidence of a well conceived strategy. It is rather to be ascribed to the paralysis with which the timid are stricken precisely in those critical moments that most call for presence of mind.

We hope we are right in interpreting the defeat of the Republican Party as at least partly due to the American people's repudiation of such hate-mongering tactics. But we cannot be sure of the future. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty." Let not the gentlemen in the offices of our defense committees and leagues allow any similar crisis in the future to find them asleep at their posts or psychologically unprepared to face a surprise attack of the foe.

STALIN POINTS OUT A CRUCIAL PROBLEM

IN his speech of November 6, on the eve of the twenty seventh anniversary of the Soviet revolution, Premier Stalin dwelt at some length on the racial issue. Though he did not expressly mention the Jews, such phrases as "the ideology of bestial nationalism," "racial hatred," "criminal policy," "fascist pogromists" clearly indicate that he had them in mind. He glorified "the ideology of the equal rights of all races and nations which is established in our country" and pointed out that the Germans, who had "selected the racial theory of human hatred as their ideological weapon," suffered "not only a military and political defeat but, above all, a moral catastrophe." He praised the Soviet peoples, whose self-sacrificing struggle has saved all the nations of Europe from the pogromists and rendered a great service to the history of mankind."

We must acknowledge that the Soviet system is the first to have realized the nature of anti-Semitism as the most frequent and wide-spread manifestation of race hatred and to have outlawed it as a menace to the social order. The Soviets fought anti-Semitism from the outset as a dangerous weapon of the counter-revolution, for they were well aware that the former Czarist regime had habitually resorted to anti-Semitism to promote political reaction and cultural obscurantism. When, after the German collapse of 1918, a National Assembly was convened in Germany, the party leader of the Conservatives predicted that a revived nationalism would ride in on the crest of the anti-Semitic wave. Indeed, whenever a chauvinistic nationalism in the guise of patriotism needs an enemy to inflame popular passion—and it always does need such a dark background before which to pose as national redeemer—no group can be found more convenient to its purpose than the ubiquitous Jewish people. Nor could any more effective device have been employed to impress nationalist pride on the established populations of European countries than to denounce the Jews in their midst as aliens. For in the modern world the Jews play a role not unlike that of their ancestors in the Middle Ages. Then it was the function of the Synagogue to proclaim, by its oppressed and abject state, the glory of the ruling Church. In our day, Jewry serves the analogous function of ministering to the arrogant pride of the national majority by being made to bear the stigma of alienage and racial inferiority. Without inflicting an inferior status on a racial

or religious minority, the dominant majority feels insecure in asserting its extravagant pretensions to glory.

Whether anti-Semitism and other racial antagonisms can be eradicated by moral and religious education, by friendly persuasion and by enlightenment is open to discussion. But in view of the role that these passions have played in bringing about the present world catastrophe, we would urge Jews to press for the adoption of the following policies:

(1) Equality of status for all racial, cultural and religious communities within the state should be proclaimed and enforced. This means that all civic, political, social, economic and cultural discrimination on grounds of race, national origin or religion must be outlawed. To accept the principle of equality for all such groups within the nation should be regarded as no less essential to democracy than to recognize the equal rights of all individuals, rights which are affirmed in the constitutions of most modern states.

(2) We Jews should understand that our problems, though in some respects different from those of other minorities, cannot be solved unless public opinion be as sensitized to the rights of societal groups as it is to the rights of individual citizens. As matters stand today, even the well-meaning non-Jew who is not himself an anti-Semite is likely to condone many forms of anti-Jewish discrimination by saying: What do you Jews expect? You are no worse off than other minorities. Your suffering is a natural consequence of your insistence on maintaining your distinctiveness as a group.

(3) The anti-defamation and civic defense efforts should be continued, but they should be established on a broader and more solid base. They should be directed to the defense of all wronged minorities, even though a short-sighted expediency might suggest the advantage of an alliance with the powerful majority and a connivance at injustice to others.

(4) Jews should be educated to appreciate the role of minority groups in a democratic society as the principle safeguard against totalitarianism. They should be taught that true national unity in a democracy can be achieved only by transcending differences not by suppressing them. They must be made aware that Jewish religion requires of Jews to make the best possible use of their cultural heritage. The traditional belief in the unity of God should mean to them that all natural loyalties can be harmonized and brought into a life-enhancing synthesis. To discriminate against any human being for belonging to a group and being loyal to it is thus a form of religious—or shall we say irreligious?—persecution. When American Jews realize these truths, and not until then, will they be in a position to do full justice both to their Judaism and to their Americanism.

REALITIES AND VALUES

WE USUALLY ARE AVERSE TO saying the obvious. But we cannot let Chaim Weizmann's seventieth birthday pass by in silence, although nothing which we can say about his patient, zealous and indefatigable labors on behalf of Jewry has not been said over and over again by Jews all over the world. He is a perfect exemplar of the national leader who is, first and foremost, a public servant. He has stood at the head of the Zionist cause these many years not by virtue of impassioned eloquence or forensic skill, but by reason of spiritual qualities that have won him the confidence of the Jewish public. His loyalty and integrity have enabled him to withstand calumny and surmount frustration and to persevere under the most disheartening conditions.

Whether one agrees with all his policies or not, one must pay tribute to his wholehearted self-dedication to the cause of his people. May he be given the health and strength to lead us through the present critical period and to witness the public celebration of his eightieth birthday by the Jewish Commonwealth of Palestine and by *Kelal Yisrael.*

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MANY PROPOSALS HAVE BEEN made from time to time for the reform of the calendar. Our present calendar with its months of uneven length is very annoying to statisticians and businessmen. One plan of revision which is being strongly urged in some quarters calls for a calendar year of thirteen months, each containing four full weeks or 28 days. But this would give us a year of only 364 instead of 365 days. To make up the discrepancy, a blank day is added at the end of the year which is to be observed as a holiday (on leap years two blank days). These blank days, however, are trouble makers. They interfere with the regular periodic recurrence of the Sabbath on the same day of the week. They are therefore objectionable to all Orthodox religionists who believe literally in the Book of Genesis version of the creation story. From the point of view of Reconstructionism, the religious values of the Sabbath would be unaffected if an extra weekday were added once a year. But that would hold good only if the change could be formally approved by an organized world Jewry, a condition contrary to fact. Therefore, though we do not accept the premises of the League to Preserve the Fixity of the Sabbath, which will hold a conference on December 20, we are inclined to support its stand. The conveniences afforded by a more rational calendar are less important than consideration for the religious needs of Orthodox Sabbath observers, Jewish and Christian.

WHILE WE ARE ON THE SUBject of the Sabbath, we want to call attention to a recent court victory for Sabbath observance. Judge Joseph H. Woeste laid down a decision in the Common Pleas Court in Ohio that "An applicant (for unemployment insurance) who is a member of a religious faith and who observes Saturday as his Sabbath and claims benefits under the law must not be deprived of such if it is clearly evident that he is a conscientious observer of his religious tenets." Probably not many individuals will be directly affected by this ruling, but it is an important precedent and a safeguard against encroachment on the rights of minority religious groups.

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THE YOUNG MEN'S AND WOmen's Hebrew Association of Washington Heights, New York City, recently conducted a survey of teen-age opinion on public questions among its members. The answers of the young people to one of the questions put to them is sadly disquieting. To the question "Would you favor the United States opening its doors to a greater number of refugees?" the majority of those expressing an opinion answered, *no.* Had America a generation back adopted the policy they advocated, many of them would, at the present moment, be refugees pleading for admission to this or any country that would have them. That is, if they would not be corpses rotting away wherever the Nazi butchers may have disposed of their victims. Yet no humane considerations and no loyalties to their people entered into the attitude of these young American Jews toward refugee immigration. The Americanism which they imbibed, despite their connection with a Jewish "Y," was evidently the selfish, isolationist nationalism of the America First brand. They seem unfamiliar with the glorious tradition of American hospitality to the op-

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A Chaplain Discusses Combat Religion

By LEON ROSENBERG

EVER since the beginning of this war all the reportorial facilities have been used to bring us stories about divine intervention in the rescue of men at sea, in the air and on the battlefield. Prayer, we are told, has saved many a life, as have amulets, medals and unopened Bibles carried in the right places. And there are few, if any, who are uninformed of the fact that "there are no atheists in fox-holes."

Percy Waxman, writing in the March issue of Cosmopolitan magazine, adduces case on case in support of the thesis that man in dire need can and does, through proper invocation of God's aid, possess the power to incline the divine to man's purposes. In one place he writes: "Man's extremity is indeed God's opportunity, and, interestingly enough, that spiritual fact is being discovered by many men who have not been in the habit of praying, but who in their hour of need have recognized the hand of God when stretched out toward them . . ."

The purpose of this paper is not to take issue with the need for prayer, nor with its efficacy. It does not propose to dispute the non-existence of atheists in fox-holes. It is written in the hope that it may generate among the chaplains in service and civilian ministers, as well as among the laity, the urge to discover a more wholesome approach to religion than is to be found in the persistent barrage of non-rational and mysterious drives. The effect of the miracle-seeking type of religion on the servicemen and the general public gives sufficient cause to worry about the role that religion can be expected to play in the lives of these men, and in the social order.

It is obviously necessary to point out to men the psychological drives which make them respond to religion in the way they do in times like these. Once this has been done, a critical analysis should be made of the enduring values which emanate from such an approach to religion. If it fail to stand the test, another approach should be offered, in which men can find modern concepts of religion which will help them face successfully the problems of peace as well as of war. Unless this be done immediately, religion itself and the lives of these men will for a long time be impoverished.

A word of caution is necessary. Most men resent being told why they behave in a certain fashion. They will also resist attempted redirection of their thinking as well as their religious re-education. Nonetheless, for their own sake as well as for the well-being of society, some attempt will have to be made today. Religious leaders sensitive to their moral obligations will not shrink from it.

Does War Effect a Religious Awakening?

Many civilians, as well as military men have pointed with pride to the religious reawakening which is supposed to be taking place in the armed services. Before I entered the armed forces as a chaplain I was constantly being informed of the unusually large attendance reported by chaplains at shore stations and at sea. I was told wondrous tales about the magnificent response the young men and women in the service were making to the appeal of religion. At the time, I was working with college youth and was well acquainted with the customary man-

ifestations of youth's skepticism and cynicism. Army life was supposed to have changed that, too. Within the framework of military living, men were supposed to find a new perspective of life, which included a great faith in man and God. Because, among other things, they were fighting for religious freedom, religion was supposed to have become for them a matter of intelligent concern.

I heard about these things while I was still a civilian. I continue to hear about them today. But I must confess that, after almost a year of service at home and overseas, I have failed to notice these manifestations at first hand. Neither have a good many chaplains with whom I have had more than casual contact. Nor is it in evidence in the reports of other chaplains who have had the opportunity to be with the men. It is my conviction that, in the attempt to glorify as much as possible of the military service, many have been more than euphemistic concerning the fighting man's religious proclivities.

Or perhaps the picture arose from the misinterpretation and generalization of one fact with which I have no dispute. Chaplains have reported increased attendance at divine services prior to the movement of a military unit into battle conditions. But the motive behind such attendance is evidently concern about survival, as is borne out by the admission of the same chaplains that attendance begins to diminish as rapidly as one moves away from the battle areas.

It should not be assumed that attendance at services is the only thing upon which the entire contention of the author rests. It is introduced as interesting supplementary evidence. And another fact which we cannot overlook is that many young people, who in civilian life were active in church and synagogue work, have shied away from chaplains and from organized religious activities. These tendencies are, however, worthy of further consideration.

I have heard chaplains say: "It is the privilege of every man facing Eternity to come to the realization that he must make his peace with his Maker. Perhaps this man never before found himself in a position where the salvation of his immortal soul was of such great importance and significance. Now that he finds himself face to face with an immediate need for such adjustment, the field of battle stimulates in him the recognition of those facts and thoughts which evaded him up to that moment." Sometimes the tone used by these chaplains in making such statements seemed to attribute to the men in service a remarkable religious power, something similar to that which enabled Rabbi Akiba in his last moments to achieve a majestic comprehension of the dictum, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, thy soul and thy might." The difference in character and religious insight of the man who has been a lifelong devotee of religion and the one who stumbles upon it in his last moments must be obvious even to those who know nothing of the life of Akiba. And I also question the insinuation of these chaplains that the moral capacity of men in such circumstances is likely to produce a redemptory vision of the world.

What Is Combat Religion Worth?

Before a military engagement men do consider the possibilities of survival or of death. But they will immediately begin to think of ways and means to liquidate their enemies and to attain their particular military objectives. The battlefield itself, or its imminence, is not conducive to philosophic contemplation. Nor is it likely to produce that type of

thinking which is necessary to develop one's religious convictions. The only inner debate which goes on at a time like that concerns the problem of how to outwit the enemy and how best to carry out the assigned duties.

To summon all possible aid in this struggle, men willingly invoke the Divinity. Even those who in previous times had been violently hostile to any type of religious appeal have been known to fall on their knees in brief but fervent prayer. But is this selfish appeal to be confused with religious zeal? The circumstance and the reaction have a good deal in common with the way primitive man must have reacted to the array of powers he sensed in the world about him, but which he did not understand. In his struggle for survival he made his appeal to these forces. He tried to placate them, even to convert them into allies. Such may have been the origins of his religion and religious practice. It was a religion commensurate with his understanding of the universe and his nascent consciousness of it. If we compare the primitive theurgy of dances, chants and sacrifices with the genuflection, prayers and promises of the battle-scared man in uniform we may be led to assume that religion has failed to keep pace with man's growing comprehension of the universe.

Such is not the case. The religious manifestations of wartime testify to the great lag which exists among men in the assimilation of the progress made in religious thought. This is true in our age, and is also a characteristic of the earlier history of mankind. When man began to outgrow animism it was not a ubiquitous advance. Later, when polytheism made way for the concept of henotheism, and when monolatry gave way to monotheism, the world still had a large quota of dualists and idolators. When the mores of self-preservation were refined and synthesized with religion, the new ethic did not become a widespread force for self-realization and for that type of selflessness which marked the advance made by religion. The relegation to religion of efficacy only in other-worldly salvation, is a result of the failure to sense that religion must keep pace with social ethics.

Religion has passed through the several stages of psychological upgrading. It arose in man's instinctive drive for self-preservation. Tribal traditions became the source for religious habit patterns. Finally, in our own day it has matured on the levels of reasoning and intelligence. Man today is a complex organism making his responses on several levels, and religion today shows the same complexity and is experienced by different people on different levels. The emphasis should be on the highest level. But there is little correlation between man's intellectual capacities and his mode of religious response. This is so because the average man has failed to keep in touch with the development of religious thought as well as he has with scientific progress. As a result it is almost impossible for him to establish an intelligent orientation to self, society and the cosmos, and so he proceeds to seek such an orientation on the lower levels of superstition and irrationality. It is on this basis that we can begin to understand the responses of the man on the battle-field. And it is this which the press has mistakenly called the "return to religion."

But modern man is inclined to be neither an automaton nor an illiterate. Army, Navy and Marine classification tests prove that fact. A good many of the things he is called on to do today, unthinkingly, are done because they are consistent with military expediency. They will not be carried over in the transition to civilian living. When the time of stress passes, he can therefore

be expected to discard his combat religion as easily as he sheds his military uniform. The religious concepts he has assimilated in wartime which will not correspond to the level of intelligence that he uses in his daily life will go by the board. A good deal of pre-war religion was an insult to his intelligence. As a result he discontinued further search and interest in it. Inasmuch as many of the manifestations of religion in wartime are insulting to one's intelligence, I doubt whether we will witness any widespread religious revival as a result of such experiences. Naturally we may expect the usual quota of those who will be anxious to testify to the saving grace which they experienced — usually without benefit of chaplain. In these personalities will be harbored the germs of obscurantism which have always been an impediment to religion and religious thought. Because of their testimony, many more will be driven from true religion than are attracted to it. The trend among the returning servicemen may well be to reinforce their religious illiteracy with religious indolence. We can ill afford such an eventuality. Religion will be needed by them in the reshaping of their lives, individually and collectively.

The Need for Simplicity, Sincerity and Sympathy in Religion

It is with this state of affairs that we must be immediately concerned. We must discover a therapy and begin treatment. We cannot wait until the men return home. While no success will be possible without the cooperation of the church and the synagogue at that point, those institutions will have a doubly difficult task, unless the chaplains in service prepare the men, and the ministers and rabbis on the home front prepare their institutions for the return. Religious leaders and denominational boards would do well to carry out the suggestions of Dr. Bernard Iddings Bell which are to be found in his article "Before the Men March Home," (Harpers Magazine, January 1944). While he directed his remarks to the churches, some of his statements may well serve as a springboard for current activity on the part of the chaplains. He writes: "There are three things about the churches which seem lacking to the men who are undergoing the tough discipline of training camps or are stripped to essentials on the various fronts or at sea. They deplore the absence of simplicity, sincerity and sympathy." This is sound warning not only for the churches but also for the chaplains.

The men whom we serve today have been forced into a type of living which is foreign and distasteful to many of them. Having given up their home and family ties for the duration, their daily existence has little or no meaning. At heart they are still civilians. They are willing to do the difficult tasks assigned them, but they are bewildered and confused. Many of them have turned to the chaplain in the hope that he might be helpful in the process of reorientation. Too many chaplains have failed in this process because they neglected the virtues of simplicity, sincerity and sympathy. Never did a religious minister have a better opportunity to establish a bond between himself and the men. In confidence many of these men, who went away empty-handed, told me that they were met with a line of ecclesiastical double-talk which, instead of clarifying things, confused them all the more. A lack of personal conviction was evident in the words and procedures of other chaplains. And a good many chaplains have not learned how to be sympathetic. Few are equally good listeners as they are talkers. When a man brings to the chaplain a problem which

he cannot face without some external help, an air of detachment on the part of the chaplain does not facilitate mutual confidence, nor help to establish that dynamic relationship between the two which will make for an effective solution. Just how many have been alienated from religion because of such failure on the part of chaplains, I do not know. But I fear they may be legion.

The religious illiteracy of the men in service is not the result of a lack of capacity or inclination to learning. It is due rather to the fact that in the past they were not given the proper type of religious education nor sufficient motive for religious maturation. In spite of this the chaplain is in a rather felicitous position. No fictitious motivation is necessary. The present situation and condition of the men prompts them to inquire. The chaplain does not have to deal with immature minds which cannot grasp certain fundamental religious concepts. He has a magnificent opportunity to make inroads on their religious illiteracy.

To many of the men, a chaplain in uniform is an incongruity. Somewhere they managed to learn the opposition of the Judeo-Christian tradition to the use of force and the shedding of human blood in solving the problems of humanity. It is to be made clear to these individuals that the presence of the chaplains in the armed forces does not mean a relinquishing of the opposition on the part of religion. While the chaplain may be a vital source of the religious idealism necessary for ultimate victory, it should be pointed out that his main raison d'etre in the military organization is concern for the well-being of future society and the welfare of the men he serves. If these be his aims, then with simplicity, sincerity and sympathy he can establish a mutual understanding and companionship with his men which is almost unattainable across the barriers of the formal civilian pulpit.

Lt. Col. Evans Carlson, while not a chaplain, managed to achieve such understanding with the men in his famed "Marine Raider Battalions." His men were not only willing to follow him into battle, but expressed the desire to have his advice and leadership in rebuilding their lives when the war would be over. Speaking to the chaplains of the 4th Marine Division, he recently said: "We can rely on the average American's sense of fair play. He turns to religion in his hour of need. If we give him something worthwhile, we can expect his cooperation when religion will need him." While the *quid pro quo* approach may not be the most idealistic, it is the chaplain's opportunity of the moment, and a good investment for the future of religion.

Equality Plus

By HARRY ESSRIG

QUITE a number of our people have become unduly disheartened by the events of the past decade. Even now the faint scent of melancholia hovers over the writing of some of our journalists. They have wallowed too long in the depths of despair to be cheered up by the possible turn for the better in the fortunes of Israel. Unfortunately these gentlemen are not well versed in the history of our people. Such ignorance distorts their perspective and renders them fatal victims of the skeptical mood.

It has too often been taken for granted that human tyranny once vanquished

cannot usurp the throne again. The social and political course of a people, however, like true love, never runs smooth. Every generation must in turn strike its blow for freedom or it will find its progress impeded by new fetters. Jewish history since the French Revolution proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that, unless mankind is engaged in an uncompromising and continuous struggle against the forces of reaction, human liberties tend to be whittled down until nothing is left of them. Periods of deep suffering and apparent frustration must therefore serve as intervals for the careful husbanding of all resources in preparation for "X" day, when history will take a new and upward turn in its spiral course.

Confusion as to the Meaning Of Emancipation

But even more disturbing than the lack of faith characteristic of so many of our people in the present crisis is the general confusion in our midst during normal times concerning what is to be done about the social and political equality which the Jewish minority has won since the French Revolution. Only very few do not grope blindly in the labyrinth of conflicting interests for a path leading to a happy adjustment to their environment. The assimilationist fringe has, since the days of Mendelssohn's children, used their new-found liberation as a stepping stone to success in their personal careers. On the other extreme, we continue to meet with the spiritual heirs of the Dutch Jewish community which rejected the benefits of emancipation out of fear lest the sheltered medieval structure of Jewish community life be rudely shaken by the tempests of the outside world.

The rank and file Jews, however, have remained everywhere potential "split personalities." Somehow they could not reconcile their conflicting instincts. They became tied up in emotional knots. They were naturally eager to preserve their individuality and unique cultural pattern, though the new industrial civilization tended to destroy all barriers between citizens of the commonwealth. On the other hand, in certain countries, the urge to fuse with the majority group and be submerged by the dominant strata of society was almost irresistible. At times it even seemed to be an inevitable step in the flowering of full equality. Life in the modern world is so complex that most Jews became engrossed in the problem of mere economic survival. They were thus compelled to improvise make-shift solutions for the problem of how to retain their Jewishness. Up to the present moment, this dilemma has continued to haunt our most tranquil moods.

Catastrophic Wishful Thinking

It is no wonder then that some of us have become guilty of "catastrophic wishful thinking." The sudden outbursts of animal passion on the part of the rowdy elements of the surrounding populations, though taking a heavy toll in human life and wealth, also eased our psychological tension. We could now reject the outside world with equanimity and seek again the warmth of the racial womb and the security of an ancient cult. Our subconscious fears regarding the ultimate cost of free and unbridled equality were comfortably laid to rest. We foreswore the allures of emancipation and loudly wept by the rivers of modern Babylons. The past of our people once again became a burden which did not press too tightly on our bruised shoulders as we turned our eyes inwardly toward the Zions of the contemporary visionaries. Jewishness once more became a refuge from the despair of frustration, instead of a wholesome and full-throated expression of the national élan. But our minds were seemingly at ease as we gripped the wanderer's staff: the world would have no traffic

with us and so we will fling the challenge of our heritage in its very teeth. This represented the mood of a battered people that mistook the aberrations of history for its general direction. But no sooner was the momentary persecution and panic at an end, than we were faced with the age-old problem all over again: How were we to adjust ourselves to the non-Jewish world?

Because our thinking was muddled, because our understanding of the processes of history never rose higher than the child-like emotional level, we presented a confused and somewhat distorted picture of ourselves to our next-door neighbors as well as to the "hick" whose notions about Jews were as fantastic and unreal as Superman's antics. Someone should have button-holed each and every one of us and helped unwind that tangle of contradictions that comprises the modern Jew. Someone should have pulled us off into a corner and politely insisted: "What do you *really* want? To have the cake and eat it too? Emancipation and segregation at the very same time? A liberal sprinkling of each? Or *equality plus?*"

Minority Rights and Minority Obligations

Confession is good for the soul and a wee bit of clear thinking might have been the best medicine for the communal mind. We should by this time have fully committed ourselves to the proposition that Jewish life may flourish only under conditions of absolute social, political and economic equality. The ravages of an insane dictatorship could thus not shake our fundamental acceptance of the modern world and our indomitable will to participate in all its manifold activities. Nor could a psychological ghetto in times of crisis be offered as a cure for the hurt inflicted by persecution. There is just no going home again to the harbor of cultural isolationism or to a pseudo-racial snobbishness, no matter how much our journalists might rhapsodize about the virtues and graces of the old medieval ghetto life.

Once we admit this fact—that complete emancipation is indispensable to our survival—we must be brave enough to follow through with its implications. For, mind you, we must play the game squarely and avoid the mental acrobatics of trying to face two ways at once. We will have to look stern truths in the face without welching.

In the first place, *we must be prepared for the risks of equality.* Uninhibited social intercourse and unconditional sharing in the politico-economic life of the nation tend to destroy many vestiges of exclusivism on the part of every minority group. The pressure of the dominant cultural forces will pound in restless surges of energy on the shores of our island, and we cannot take to the hills in alarm. Somehow the impact of emancipation can never be hedged in by restrictions of our own making. History has a habit of prescribing its own course of development. Out of the interaction between the various nationality groups of the commonwealth cultural influences are generated that cannot be denied or ignored. We must meet the challenge of these influences on a give-and-take basis, well aware that a minority is always under a handicap in competing with the majority pattern of living. But then we have, of our own volition, chosen to further our unique communal expression. We must, therefore, make up in enthusiasm and intensity for what we may lack in sheer weight of numbers.

Much progress has been made in our day toward delimiting the extent of power that may legitimately be wielded by the majority over minorities. It is time then to impress upon the minority groups that they must not, on their part, abuse their rights. Their vested interests must also

come under our scrutiny. National minorities are, to be sure, entitled to protection, and all possible aid should be given them in maintaining their group integrity. But the danger point must be watched, lest members of minority communities become presumptuous and ask for prerogatives that defeat the very purpose of our democratic striving—complete equality. A group forfeits its rights when it fails to cooperate with other groups in promoting the common welfare. The failure of minorities to recognize their obligations to the majority is no less to be condemned than the failure of the majority to respect the rights of the minority. The fine balance of socio-cultural relationships within the framework of the nation can be as easily upset by those who shun the responsibilities of adjustment as by those who, through discrimination and prejudice, make a healthy adjustment impossible.

The Danger of Romanticizing the Past

The second thought that we must bear in mind is that we should not expect to attain that peculiar status known as "equality plus." We cannot go on longing for the "green valleys" of our feudal days if we would keep abreast with the progress of a highly industrialized, forward-marching world. Nostalgia for the life lived in an East-European village is incongruous with the desire for the tangible comforts of Park Avenue apartments. If we must move with the tempo of a mechanized, stream-lined society, it is folly to romanticize the so-called tranquility of spirit that pervaded the restricted spheres of activity in which our fathers engaged. If our souls are to be fired with the visions of youth, we must not permit ourselves to be entranced by the reminiscent dreams of the aged

For a price must always be paid by those who dare to be in the vanguard of history And those who flee from the Sodoms of the past must not pause to dart longing glances at the smoldering ruins. As in the case of Lot's wife, such backward-looking immobilizes. To maintain equality calls for delicate adjustment; the social equilibrium is easily disturbed. The point where we arrest our progress in order to cling to the past is likely to be the point at which the enemies of progress seize the initiative. We must push forward to a realization of the promise of full emancipation and bring our people into step with the onward-thrusting masses of mankind. The choice ultimately narrows itself down to the ghetto or unconditional acceptance of equality. To attempt to pursue a middle of the road policy because it is the path of least resistance is to follow a confusing course that leads nowhere.

As we stand on the eve of great events, our journalists would do well to cease lamenting the future of Israel in the post-war society. Let their melancholia be buried with the victims of the Nazi madness. Our people are at long last confronted, after a decade of ruthless extermination on the blood-drenched continent of Europe, with the great opportunity of finding a secure place within the company of nations. Let us not, therefore, confuse the issue of adjustment any more. Let us overcome our childish fears and show faith and hope in the future by seeking for the Jewish people not only survival but an honorable share, along with all other peoples, in the democratic reconstruction of our social order.

A New Generation . . . From the Ghetto of Warsaw

By LILLIAN REZNICK OTT

We are the legions,
The martyred legions
Old and new.
We are the people
For whom no bands played
And no flags waved
And no drums rolled.
We are the murdered Jews,
Sons and fathers and children
And wives, who were put to shame
In the untold Ghettoes of Warsaw.

We are the legions
Hosts upon hosts,
Whose bones lie scattered
Throughout the earth,
Upon mountain tops
And in furrows deep
And in restless seas.
Like newly opened petals
Plucked loose by a raging wind
We have perished
Though we haven't sinned . . .
We were cut off
Without reason or rhyme
Before our time.

Aye, as ever
From age to age,
To begin another historic page,
We need come once again
To gather our own
From the new fields
Of bloody slaughter.
Every generation we come
To gather each his own,
A father his son
And brother his brother
And friend his friend,
To deliver each his own
From the hands of man,
Into the protective custody
Of death's oblivion.

But we do not rest!

Nay, and we shall not rest
Until our quest is done.
No, we shall not rest,
For the martyred dead
Never rest,
Nor are their voices ever stilled.
Theirs is that anguished cry,
Theirs that tortured sigh
Heard in the night.
Theirs are the flaming tongues
That light the sky,
Theirs the challenging thunder
Shouting, Why?
Why were we slaughtered,
Why?

Answer, if you can,
You beasts who walk
In the form of man, answer,
For you cannot longer defy
This, our challenge, Why?
Why were we murdered,
Why?
And you, mad men, who slay
And rape and torture us
And plunder for centuries
Night and day, whether in fury
Or because of greed
Or in drunken revelry,
Is this the mission you received
At Calvary?
Is this your heritage,
The bloody sword,
With which to justify
The son of Judah, your Lord?

Helpless as withered weeds
We wept by the waters of Babylon
Yet staunch as Lebanon's cedars.

We wept by the Euphrates
And we wept by the Nile

And died even then,
Rather than defile
Our sacred legacy from Sinai.

And this alone is our code,
Shema Yisrael, Adonai Ehad!
And for this we died.

We built Temples,
Monuments to God's glory,
And for this we died.

We gave birth to prophets
Whose prophecies are immortal,
And for this we died.

We created wondrous lyrics,
Psalms that anoint the soul,
And for this we died.

We received God's Own Commands:

"Thou shalt have no other gods
Before Me!"
Indeed, Thou alone art Almighty!
And for this we die, still.

"Thou shalt not steal!"
But we are robbed at every turn,
And for this we die, still.

"Thou shalt not kill!"
But we are maimed and mutilated,
And for this we die, still.

"Thou shalt not covet!"
But our possessions are plundered,
And for this we die, still.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery!"
But our daughters are violated,
And for this we die, still.

"Thou shalt keep the Sabbath Day holy!"
But we are mocked and ridiculed,
And for this we die, still.

For this we die
And for that we die
And for naught, we die.

Ah, you creatures of shame,
You who debauch the human name,
And you pious, who think yourselves
Saintly and just,
Yet who stand by and witness
The depraved lust of swine
Without protest,
You speak of mercy. . . .
What a jest!

No, no, we shall not rest,
Not we, the people eternal
Nor our immortal dead.
For however vile,
No despot can restrain
The weeping echoes
Of the martyred slain,
And not until the tides
Forget to ebb and flow
Or the winds to blow
Or the storms die
Shall the martyred spirit
Cease to defy
The conscience of mankind
With this challenge,
Why?
Oh, why?

———o———

The Miracle of the Yiddish Theatre

By IRA EISENSTEIN

JACOB Ben-Ami has given the Yiddish theatre a new lease on life with his "Miracle of the Warsaw Ghetto," produced in New York this season. The Yiddish theatre had taken a nose dive after Maurice Schwartz had hit the heights with "Yoshe Kalb." After that came mere vehicles for ham acting. The musical comedies, of course, are always with us, adding little artistry to their usual fare. With the "Warsaw Ghetto," two miracles are enacted, one in which the Jews of Warsaw take part, the other in which the Yiddish theatre is the hero. The pessimists will have to wait a bit longer for that eulogy on the demise of the Yiddish theatre.

H. Leivick has written a play worthy of the theme. It is a "heroic drama." Spending an evening witnessing it has practically nothing in common with spending a month in Florida. On the contrary, after the play you could use a vacation. It is catharsis, as Aristole liked it, with plenty of pity and terror. But it is not melodrama, as most Yiddish-theatre - goers have known it. The restraint, both in writing and in acting, is unusual, and effective; in fact, it hits the audience harder than hysterics would.

The plot deals with the magnificent, if militarily futile, resistance of the Warsaw ghetto to the Nazis. The decision to fight is not easily reached. Israel (played by Ben-Ami himself) represents the opposition, who feel that Jews should not resort to the violence of the foe unless they are prepared, as they are obviously not, to do a thorough job of bestiality and to revel in it. When, however, his beloved Rachel dies on a mission to the Underground, he awakens to the spiritual challenge and grows into the leading guerilla of them all. The play ends in a stirring scene, in which all take an oath by the scroll of the Torah not to yield until the last drop of blood has been shed in the battle against "*yimah-shemo*" (as Hitler is called throughout).

The resistance is led by three men, representing various groupings within the community, a Bundist, a Communist and a *Halutz* from Palestine. They are united in this common struggle. Skilful writing and production combine, however, to make them human beings, and not mere symbols of Jewish unity. Yehiel, the Bundist, is particularly alive. Most lovable is Reb Yitzhok, an interesting variation of the stage rabbi. He is pious, to be sure, but in no solemn or sanctimonious way. He is earthy; he lugs pails of water with the rest, blesses the fighters, heartens the disheartened, comforts the bereaved; and in his spare moments, carries on moving dialogues with God. One of the high points of the evening comes at the end of the first act, when, as the Seder begins, and the rhythm of Nazi troops marching is heard overhead, the men about the Seder table in the synagogue collapse in despair. The Rabbi struggles first with himself, to conquer his fear, repeating, again and again, the motto which has been scribbled on the wall, "*Gevalt,* Jews, do not despair!" As he repeats it, and repeats it, he breaks into a pleading, prodding, insistent chant. As the chant grows in volume and intensity, the heads about the table rise slowly, one by one. Soon, other voices join the Rabbi's, and before long they have all taken guns and burst into a hasidic, triumphant dance with the Rabbi, shouting, "*Gevalt,* Jews, do not de-

spair." It is a moment in the theatre of which any director may be proud. The audience sobbed its appreciation.

No Yiddish play is without its symbolic character, the wandering Jew, the mystic, the lone character who speaks in riddles and obliquely interprets the action. Eisak, in this play, is brilliantly acted, and his part richly written. His reason has fled since his wife and children were slain by the Nazis, and he comes to issue a warning from Elijah that the day of deliverance is at hand. Throughout the play, he seems to be searching for Elijah, and trying to get his message across at the same time. "Why does not Elijah come?" he says, "we have poured out all this wine for him, all this wine. . . .

No excuse should be considered good enough to justify staying away from Ben-Ami's production. Don't say you understand no Yiddish; the action speaks for itself. Don't say that you have read enough about the Warsaw ghetto; the written word is a blurred image compared to this experience. Don't think it is morbid; on the contrary, you emerge cleansed (if not washed out) because you have seen the indomitable Jewish spirit on the march.

Book Notes

A WRONG PLEA FOR A RIGHT CAUSE

THE JEW IN OUR DAY, by Waldo Frank. Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944.

IT is doubtful whether Waldo Frank's recent collection of previously published essays on *The Jew in Our Day* would have received any notice, had it not been given a challenging send-off by Reinhold Niebuhr. The challenge is not to the reader but to Waldo Frank himself. This gives the book something of the nature of a debate, and who would forego listening to two such men debating the Jewish question?

Without a very strong desire to know what some of our best minds, both Jewish and non-Jewish, think about the present dilemma of the Jew, it is hard to plow through even the first of Frank's essays. How can one follow a writer who starts out with the assumption that Jews differ from the rest of the world in that they possess a unique tradition which "courses through the veins!" Modern thought recognizes only a biological heritage as coursing through the veins. A tradition, which is a social heritage, is known to be transmitted only through the social process of education. Unless that process is deliberately pursued, the tradition or social heritage dies with those who are the last to foster it.

Waldo Frank, however, seems to imply that there is no such distinction between the social and the biological heritage. He would have us believe that whatever comes out in a man's life inheres in his blood. Since the Jews have evolved a unique traditon, there must be something unique in their very blood. That tradition he would maintain is bound to assert itself in one form or another, whether the Jew knows it or not. This book is therefore intended as an exhortation to the Jew to become fully aware of his destiny which is written in his very blood and to accept that destiny even at the cost of martyrdom. All this borders so peril-

ously on the kind of race theories we have to regard as lethal that only our respect for two such good names as are associated with the book can induce us to go on from that point.

Even more irritating is the second essay, in which the author looks to an ideal community of Jewish elite to solve the problem of the Jew. That essay was written in 1926, when Italian fascism was in the ascendant, and many thoughtful persons were inclined to believe that Fascism, in basing itself on the principle of the elite, pointed the way to the future of human society. No wonder Waldo Frank then thought that, if the Jews discovered their own elite, the problem of the Jew would at last come to be understood and solved. Of course, the members of that Jewish elite would be chosen for abilities quite other than those that marked the elite of other peoples. A fundamental issue is here involved. Waldo Frank's philosophy of life seems to favor the idea of chosenness. A consistent believer in democracy, however, finds it hard to live with that idea, no matter what entitles one to be of the chosen few.

Nevertheless, a genuine interest in what Jews and Judaism mean to some of our own intellectuals should enable us to overcome the resistance aroused by the first two essays in the book. Purely as a matter of objective fact, we ought to know what a man of Waldo Frank's moral stature expects of the Jewish people. Whether we agree with him or not, we cannot afford to bypass one who is so unquestionably eager to serve Jewry. Though he is mistaken in assuming that a tradition is ineradicable, he, nevertheless, has the good sense to realize that the indestructible essence of the Jewish tradition is contained in the interplay of the two ideas, God and social justice. Nor can we withhold our amen to his passionate plea that those ideas, which played so significant a part in keeping the Jewish people alive in the past because they were always relevant to the milieu, be made relevant also to the modern milieu.

But he gets himself in the wrong again when, in order to illustrate what being relevant today means, he points to the philosophies of Marx and Spinoza. He claims that, if Judaism were related to the life of our day as vitally as it was related to the life of the Middle Ages, it would transform itself sufficiently to include both Marx and Spinoza in the roster of its prophets. That, of course, is absurd. A prophet is one who denounces yet loves his people with every fibre of his being. Marx and Spinoza hated the Jewish people and looked forward to its demise. Moses Hess, who combined in himself the best of both Marx and Spinoza and, in addition, loved his people, actually does figure among modern Jewry's prophets.

If we can manage to overlook all such untenable notions as the foregoing, we can get to the heart of the argument. Waldo Frank's fundamental thesis is that the only way in which the struggle on the part of the Jews to survive can make any sense is for them to carry on that struggle consciously and deliberately with the purpose of establishing on earth God's Kingdom of justice. This to him is no mere phrase. He would translate that purpose into a struggle against the present social system which is based on a predatory economy and which he characterizes as corrupt and decaying. This is a big order, yet he would have the Jew accept nothing less as his mission in life.

Niebuhr makes the point that this is no time for the Jews to strain after universal missions. They are being threatened with annihilation. Their first care must be to achieve a minimum of security. Yet, from Niebuhr's own standpoint, it would seem that Frank has the better of the argument. His reply is that the best time to evolve an ideal worth dying for

is when one's life is threatened. Such an ideal at best might actually save one's life; at worst it might confer the crown of martyrdom. Frank, in refuting Niebuhr, proves that Niebuhr is carried away by his warm interest in the fate of the Jews to the point of being inconsistent with his own theological world-outlook.

This is by no means a cheerful debate, but it is one in which Jews ought to engage among themselves. It calls for greater clarity of the issues involved than is displayed in this book, but it must be motivated by the same earnestness and desire to get at the truth as motivates both Niebuhr and Frank. Such a debate would clear the atmosphere of the fog of vaporous generalities which at present envelops Jewish life. It might ultimately get the Jews to know their own mind. Upon such knowledge depends not only their salvation but their very survival.

MORDECAI M. KAPLAN

AMERICAN JEWISH CONFERENCE, ITS ORGANIZATION AND PROCEEDINGS, FIRST SESSION, 1943. *Edited by Alexander S. Kohanski. American Jewish Conference, New York,* 1944. *pp.* 407.

THE American Jewish Conference was a unique experiment in American-Jewish life. The first session of the Conference, held from August 20 to September 2, 1943 in New York City, was truly historic. All those who witnessed it and participated in it experienced a sense of dedication and inspiration rare in the annals of American Jewry. Those who could not attend the Conference and even those who did have been eagerly awaiting the publication of its proceedings. The records of that Conference are of interest not only to the historian and sociologist of Jewish life but to all Jews who are concerned with the survival of Judaism in America.

Dr. Kohanski has rendered a service in making possible a readable and comprehensive summary of the original records. He has summarized not only the proceedings of the Conference, but also the story of its origination, beginning with Henry Monsky's letter to the Pittsburgh meeting and describing the events of the Pittsburgh meeting, the organization which it set up, and the call to the Conference. He then goes on to relate the transactions of the Conference Committees as well as of the plenary sessions. From the point of view of compactness, readability and general interest, Dr. Kohanski was wise in not publishing the complete text of the records, which would have filled several volumes. This condensation enhances the value of the volume for the general reader. Nevertheless, a compilation of all the documentary material would be of great interest to those concerned with the problem of American Jewish life and to students of American Jewish history. It is hoped, therefore, that the Conference may, at some future time, publish the full record.

RELIEF AND REHABILITATION, by Zorach Varhaftig. Institute of Jewish Affairs of the American Jewish Congress, New York, 1944, *pp.* 223.

THIS study on the Jewish aspects of Relief and Rehabilitation is the first in a series entitled "From War to Peace," being prepared and published by the Institute of Jewish Affairs. It represents the first comprehensive attempt to analyze the work and the set-up of the UNRRA and its relation to Jewish needs. The study was prepared in time for the meeting of the Council of the UNRRA which was held in September. It is an excellent analysis and an exhaustive treatment of the subject. Unfortunately, the present

UNRRA set-up does not allow direct representation of the Jewish group. Its representatives could only sit in as observers at the sessions of committees of the UNRRA. The book includes a brief statement on what the UNRRA should do about Jewish needs in the light of the anomalous situation of the Jewish people in Europe. Most of it is based on the premise that the Jews constitute a group with special problems. The American Jewish Committee in its "Committee Reporter" of November 1944 gloatingly reports that the UNRRA has adopted the view of the American Jewish Committee not to deal with the Jews as a category separate from other persons whose nationality they share. The British memorandum, which attempts to clarify the national status of the Jewish refugees, states that "the criterion to be adopted in dealing with such persons is their national status and their place of former settled residence, and not their religion or race." Jews scattered through the liberated countries of Europe, regardless of their previous citizenship or place of residence, will be extended relief and helped to return to their former homes, but will be dealt with as individuals. The work of relief and rehabilitation is a complex problem, and those interested in it will find in Varhaftig's study a detailed account of the work of UNRRA and of the needs of the Jews of Europe.

JEWISH BOOK ANNUAL, Jewish Book Council of America, New York, 1944.

IN connection with this year's observance of Jewish Book Month (November 10-December 10), the Jewish Book Council of America has again issued an Annual containing an English, a Hebrew, and a Yiddish section. As in previous years, the Annual contains a miscellany of delectable items in all three languages about books and writers and Publication Societies and the Press. All of it will beguile the lover of Jewish books. But, as in previous years, the question arises: For whom is the Annual meant? The Annual as it is, contains too much. Rabbis, teachers and scholars will find the Annual decidedly helpful, but others will find themselves overwhelmed. For "the average, intelligent reader" there should be fewer items. These should be carefully selected and presented in a form that would whet the literary appetite. SAMUEL DININ

CORRESPONDENCE

AMERICAN JEWRY'S ROLE IN THE UPBUILDING OF PALESTINE

Sirs:

The paper "Preparing for the Jewish Commonwealth" which appeared in the November 3 issue of the *Reconstructionist* was a provocative and somewhat unusual exposition on Zionism in that it emphasized aspects of the question of Eretz Yisrael that are often left to gather dust in the corners. Although my idea of a Jewish "Commonwealth" and my conception of Jewish "culture" spring from an orientation and motivation different from those suggested in the paper, it was a pleasurable experience to read clear and basic analyses of fundamental problems of Zionism.

I noted with regret, however, that in every case where the role and duty of American Jewry in the creation of a virile Palestinian *yishuv* was discussed, this participation was conceived of as an intellectual or objective or physically detached one. Only in one or two cases was it vaguely implied that American hands and American skills would be wanted or required in the building of the Homeland. And yet the author and every discussant of the paper agree that without a strong Palestine there can be no Diaspora survival; and further, every discussant assumes, with varying qualifications of course, the right to delineate our stake in the growth of Palestine

In the past decade the world—or its enlightened members—has learned to approach crucial questions with reference to a table of precedence: we do not solve the problem of the cultural existence of a people until we are assured that we have provided for the physical existence of that people; we do not solve the problem of France's or Yugoslavia's or Austria's sociological welfare until we are as-

sured that the peoples of France and Yugoslavia and Austria will be able to live on their liberated soil. Likewise with Palestine and its destined and broken people who are *not yet* on its still to be completely liberated soil.

I do not suggest that we ignore purpose and approach, that it is possible to blindly build and unconsciously live; but we must guarantee that the primary prerequisite will be met. In Palestine there are millions of dunams of land to be reclaimed and made productive, thousands of *kvutzot* and *kibbutzim* to be settled, and hundreds of factories to be constructed. We are slowly beginning to realize that unless hundreds—perhaps thousands—of American *halutzim* help fulfill these *halutz* tasks, twenty years from now we may be confronted with a crippled and inadequate homeland. This is a possibility which neither selfish nor altruistic interests can afford to accept. It can be assumed that twenty years from now anti-Semitism may still be living a violent death.

I do not understand how any discussion of culture or spiritual sociology can exceed the limits of fluffy pious abstractness unless every principle and every value is understood in its actual daily relationship to the human being. American Jewry will not be able to artificially appropriate a way of life from Eretz Yisrael; it must help create with its own collective body and flesh such a culture, and it must maintain a growing vitality and indissoluble ties with Palestine.

If every Jew has a stake, he also has a responsibility in the land. The gravest, most urgent responsibility is to build, now, in the beginning. Palestine needs more, much more, than the consuming intellectual support of American Zionists; it needs workers and passionate toilers—American *halutzim*.

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The editors are in agreement with our correspondent on the importance of an American *halutz* movement. We do not agree, however, that work for the spiritual objectives outlined in the paper on which he comments need be deferred on that account. Had the Zionist movement in the past acted on the basis of a "table of precedence" such as he advocates we should not have begun colonizing Palestine, until we had a political charter to it, we should not have established a university and other cultural institutions until we had an assured economy, and we should not have purchased land in Palestine until we were certain that we could defend our title to it against aggression. There are many ways of serving Zionism and we should allow and encourage the active and simultaneous expression of every interest that Jews have in their homeland.

—EDITORS.

REALITIES AND VALUES

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pressed, or unmoved by it. We recommend that they pay a visit to the Statue of Liberty and ponder on the words of Emma Lazarus inscribed on its base:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. . . .
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me.
I lift my lamp beside the golden door."

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PRAISE IS DUE TO THE STUdents' Society of McGill University in Montreal, Canada. It recently declared its opposition "to all forms of racial discrimination" and set up a committee "to watch and study such possible discrimination" and to bring any case of it "to the attention of the Students' Executive Council, who shall call a meeting to attempt to rectify such discrimination." Oher American universities please note. The numerus clausus, ghetto benches, and "exclusive" fraternities do not fit the pattern of a democratic institution of learning.

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IN THE RECENT ELECTIONS, the citizens of Colorado were asked to vote on a referendum submitting to them an amendment to the state Constitution which would have barred alien Japanese from owning land in the state. The amendment was defeated mainly through the action of the Colorado Committee for Fair Play organized by the churches. For two months prior to the vote, the Congregational Council on Social Action had a special worker, the Rev. Galen Weaver, in charge of the job of opposing the provision. It would be a fine thing if we could depend on all religious bodies to put an end to the baiting of aliens by patrioteering demagogues.